

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are pending in the present application. It is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration of the present application is requested for the following reasons.

The Objection to the Drawings under 37 CFR § 1.83 (a) should be withdrawn

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR § 1.83(a). Specifically, it is noted that the relay and the fuse mentioned in claim 7 of the present Application must be shown or the features canceled from the claim. The relay and fuse are indicated by numeral 13 in both Figure 1 and Figure 2, corresponding to the description in the amended specification which indicates "an electrical aggregate 13 such as a relay or a fuse." No new matter has been introduced by the amendment, since the amendment merely copies the original claim language. In view of the above, it is submitted that the specification is in compliance with 37 CFR § 1.83(a).

For at least the reasons discussed above, the objection to the drawings under 37 CFR § 1.83(a) should be withdrawn.

The Rejection of Claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, should be withdrawn

Claims 1-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Claim 1 of the present application recites "A multipole electrical connector... comprising: a contact set that is supported in the multipole electrical connector; and a plurality of contact elements, each contact element including a contact section and a connecting section..." Claims are read in light of the specification. The specification states that "A multipole electrical connector 11... is part of an electric pin-and-socket coupler and is provided for releasable coupling with a mating connector 12..." See page 2 lines 13-15. The language of claim 1 clearly means that the "contact set **that is support d in the multipol electrical-connector**" refers to the mating connector 12 as shown in Figures 1 and 2. Similarly, the "plurality of contact elements, **each contact 1 ment**

including a contact section and a connecting section" refers to the multipole electrical connector 11 as shown in Figures 1 and 2. Consequently, when read in light of the specification, the language of claim 1 is clear in describing the relationship between the "a contact set" and the "a plurality of contact elements."

For at least the above reasons, the objection to claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, should be withdrawn.

The Rejection of Claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). It is contended that these claims are unpatentable over Lundergan (U.S. Patent No. 3,748,633). Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 of the present application recites "A multipole electrical connector for providing a releasable coupling with a mating connector, comprising: a contact set that is supported in the multipole electrical connector; and a plurality of contact elements, each contact element including a contact section and a connecting section, wherein: each contact section is formed together with each connecting section from a single-layer stamped grid, and each contact section is arranged with each connecting section in a plane." In contrast to the claimed invention of claim 1 of the present Application, Lundergan reference discloses a contact set being supported by a housing, rather than in the multipole electrical connector. Lundergan reference also does not disclose each contact section being arranged with each connecting section in a plane, as recited in claim 1. Because Lundergan reference does not teach or suggest each element of claim 1 of the present Application, Lundergan reference does not anticipate claim 1 of the present application.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is allowable over Lundergan. Claims 2-5 ultimately depend on claim 1. Consequently, claims 2-5 are also allowable over Lundergan for the same reasons that claim 1 is allowable.

Independent of the above, claim 2 of the present application recites

"The connector according to claim 1, wherein: each contact section is formed in one piece and with a fork shape, each contact section includes a first limb and a second limb, the second limb being separated by a slit from the first limb and being disposed at least over a partial length opposite the first limb." Lundergan reference, in contrast to the present invention, does not describe **contact** sections with a fork shape; instead, Lundergan reference describes "fork type spring **connectors**." See, e.g., column 1, lines 21-22.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 2 is allowable over Lundergan. Claims 3-5 ultimately depend on claim 2. Consequently, claims 3-5 are also allowable over Lundergan for the same reasons that claim 2 is allowable.

Independent of the above, claim 4 of the present application recites "The connector according to claim 2, further comprising: a tie bar branching off perpendicularly from the first limb and from which the second limb emanates perpendicularly." Lundergan reference is silent regarding a tie bar which emanates **perpendicularly** from the second limb. Because Lundergan reference does not teach or suggest each element of claim 4 of the present Application, Lundergan reference does not anticipate claim 4 of the present application.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 4 is allowable over Lundergan. Claim 5 depends on claim 4. Consequently, claim 5 is also allowable over Lundergan for the same reasons that claim 4 is allowable.

Independent of the above, claim 5 of the present application recites "The connector according to claim 4, wherein: at least the second limb includes a detent element that projects into the slit and that, when each contact section is contacted with a counter-contact section of a mating connector, during which the second limb is resiliently displaced, engages in a counter-detent element." Lundergan reference, in contrast, discloses no counter-detent element with which its purported detent element engages following resilient displacement of a limb of a contact. Because Lundergan reference does not teach or suggest each element of claim 5 of the present Application, Lundergan reference does not anticipate claim 5 of the present application.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 5 is allowable over

Lundergan.

The Rejection of Claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). It is contended that claims 1-5 are unpatentable over Bouley (U.S. Patent No. 3,732,531). Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 of the present application recites "A multipole electrical connector for providing a releasable coupling with a mating connector, comprising: a contact set that is supported in the multipole electrical connector; and a plurality of contact elements, each contact element including a contact section and a connecting section, wherein: each contact section is formed together with each connecting section from a single-layer stamped grid, and each contact section is arranged with each connecting section in a plane." In contrast to the claimed invention of claim 1 of the present Application, Bouley reference does not disclose a contact set being supported in the multipole electrical connector. Bouley reference also does not disclose each contact section being arranged with each connecting section in a plane. Because Bouley reference does not teach or suggest each element of claim 1 of the present Application, Bouley reference does not anticipate claim 1 of the present application.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is allowable over Bouley. Claims 2-5 ultimately depend on claim 1. Consequently, claims 2-5 are also allowable over Bouley for the same reasons that claim 1 is allowable.

Independent of the above, claim 4 of the present application recites "The connector according to claim 2, further comprising: a tie bar branching off perpendicularly from the first limb and from which the second limb emanates perpendicularly." Bouley reference is silent regarding a tie bar which emanates **perpendicularly** from the second limb. Because Bouley reference does not teach or suggest each element of claim 4 of the present Application, Bouley reference does not anticipate claim 4 of the present application.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 4 is allowable over Bouley.

Claim 5 depends on claim 4. Consequently, claim 5 is also allowable over Bouley for the same reasons that claim 4 is allowable.

Independent of the above, claim 5 of the present application recites "The connector according to claim 4, wherein: at least the second limb includes a detent element that projects into the slit and that, when each contact section is contacted with a counter-contact section of a mating connector, during which the second limb is resiliently displaced, engages in a counter-detent element." Bouley reference, in contrast, discloses no counter-detent element with which its purported detent element engages following resilient displacement of a limb of a contact. Because Bouley reference does not teach or suggest each element of claim 5 of the present Application, Bouley reference does not anticipate claim 5 of the present application.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 5 is allowable over Bouley.

The Rejection of Claims 6-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn

Claims 6-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). It is contended that claim 6 is unpatentable over Lundergan (U.S. Patent No. 3,748,633) in view of Francis (U.S. Patent No. 3,609, 597); that claim 7 is unpatentable over Lundergan in view of Francis and Zintler et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,823,798); and that claim 8 is unpatentable over Lundergan in view of Harting et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,196,853). Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

In order for a claim to be rejected for obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), not only must the prior art teach or suggest each element of the claim, but the prior art must also suggest combining the elements in the manner contemplated by the claim. See Northern Telecom, Inc. v. Datapoint Corp., 908 F. 2d 931, 934 (Fed. Cir. 1990), cert. denied, 111 S. Ct. 296 (1990); In re Bond, 910 F. 2d 831, 834 (Fed. Cir. 1990). The Examiner bears the initial burden of establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness. See M.P.E.P. § 2142. To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, the Examiner must show, *inter alia*, that there is some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to

modify or combine the references and that, when so modified or combined, the prior art teaches or suggests all of the claim limitations. See M.P.E.P. § 2143. Applicants respectfully submit that these criteria for obviousness are not met here.

Claim 6 depends on claim 5, and claims 6-8 ultimately depend on claim 1. Francis, Zintler, and Harting references, either individually or in combination, do not teach or suggest the claim limitations of claims 1 and 5 of the present Application regarding which Lundergan or Bouley are silent, as shown in the discussion on § 102(b) anticipation rejection. Accordingly, even if one combined Francis, Zintler, or Harting with Lundergan or Bouley, such combination could not approximate the invention of claims 1 and 5. Therefore, dependent claims 6-8 are not rendered obvious for at least the reasons given for claims 1 and 5.

For at least the reasons discussed above, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 6-8 under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) is hereby respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the present invention is new, non-obvious, and useful. Favorable reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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CUSTOMER NO. 26646

Application Serial No. 09/801,527

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In the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on p. 2, line 13, with the following paragraph:

--A multipole electrical connector 11, shown in Figures 1 and 2, is part of an electric pin-and-socket coupler and is provided for releasable coupling with a mating connector 12 as part of an electrical aggregate 13 such as a relay or a fuse--